

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

1988

The importance of the affective dimension in composition

Diana Elva Acevedo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project>



Part of the [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Acevedo, Diana Elva, "The importance of the affective dimension in composition" (1988). *Theses Digitization Project*. 365.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/365>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSION IN
COMPOSITION

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Diana Elva Acevedo
September 1988

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSION IN
COMPOSITION

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Diana Elva Acevedo
September 1988

Approved by:



Rise Axelrod, Chair, English

13 September 1988
Date



Milton Clark



Carol Haviland

PERMANENT DEED
SOUTHWORTH CO. U.S.A.
100% COTTON FIBER

Abstract

The affective dimension of composition has received less attention than its cognitive counterpart, in research and in pedagogical practice. Affect comprises the emotions, informs the choices we make, impels us to respond to cognitive information, and characterizes imagination.

When affect is downplayed by people significant to us, such as our teachers and parents, the impact is often denial of feelings, and denial of self-worth. In composition teaching, affect is traditionally downplayed in terms of the individuality a student writer brings to the composition, in terms of teacher and student response to the composition. When affect is denied this way, students are effectively cut off from a large portion of their intellect which, paradoxically, would characterize successful writing: emotional presence or personal investment in the work. This denial of affect also thwarts a significant psychological need, the need to construct narrative, to make sense of the world in terms of its connection to oneself.

Composition pedagogy must incorporate affectively oriented instruction if we want our students to write well. Being used to years of disdain toward affect in education, our students will need our support and our example before they will believe it is okay to feel. Individual instruction, or conferencing, is an effective way to bring about this support and encourage students' full intellectual commitment to their work, partly because the instructor and student must respond to each other in order to proceed, must respond effectively in order to progress.

Acknowledgements

Research is, in part a lonely process; the act of writing, also, is often a solo pursuit. But the thinking, imagining, shaping, testing, the often invisible work of composing calls for a flesh and blood audience. The support a writer receives from others is invaluable, even if the support seems unrelated to the writing.

For his enduring support and love through this trial-by-thesis, I thank my husband, my friend: John E. Garcia.

My mother, Elva Alvarez, also deserves acknowledgement. Years ago she helped me understand that learning and thinking are far more important pursuits than grades and superficial forms; her values seeded my current interest in the affective dimension of learning.

My thanks to the many friends and colleagues who generously gave warmth, camaraderie, encouragement, and who shared resources, easing much of the difficulty of extensive research. Milton Clark has been particularly generous with his time, his office, his ready wit.

My advisers, too, must be the most caring group of readers ever assembled. Their knowledge and expertise was always guiding, never pushing; Rise Axelrod, Carol Haviland, and Milton Clark are among the finest teachers one could have.

Table of Contents

Title Page.....	i
Signature Page	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1: Background.....	1
Chapter 2: Definition and Modern Perspectives.....	6
Chapter 3: Comprehensive Perspectives on the Affective Dimension and the Impact of Denial.....	23
Chapter 4: The Affective Dimension in Writing as Narrative: The Importance of Acceptance	41
Chapter 5: Facilitating the Writing as Narrative Connection.....	49
References:.....	55

Chapter 1.

Background

Rational, emotional. Cognitive, affective. Objective, subjective. These word pairs illustrate a simplifying dichotomy of a complex phenomenon. Broadly, cognition is thinking; affect is feeling. Although our language betrays our compulsion toward simplification, thinking does not occur without feeling, nor vice versa, except as a psychological dysfunction or as a personality disorder. We can also find in our language other examples of the relationship of cognition to affect: we define the hard, ruthless, or calculating person as unfeeling, one who literally thinks without feeling. Conversely, we label as unthinking the person who is soft, hysterical, or angst-ridden. Healthy, balanced people generally do not reason without feeling, nor do they feel without reasoning. Yet many students have been taught that writing must be objective, that personal observations or responses are too closely linked with emotion and are therefore subjective and have no place in school writing.

The cognitive dimension of writing has long been the focus of composition research and of composition pedagogy. The affective dimension, on the other hand, is little understood, hardly regarded as a valid pedagogical concept or as a legitimate subject for research. My purpose here is to examine briefly a source of modern perceptions regarding affect, to define the affective dimension of writing in such a way that its significance to the whole of composition pedagogy becomes evident, and to show how a too-low level of interest in the affective dimension adversely impacts student writers.

The modern separation of cognitive and affective functions and the relative disinterest in the affective have roots in antiquity. Plato, for example, feared affect

in others, especially in the responses of readers to written material where the reader cannot readily question the author. Authors, in turn, had the responsibility to write carefully, to not manipulate audiences toward something not in the public's best interest.

Plato's fear was that rational thinking would be shut out in the audiences responding to emotional appeals. Rhetoricians, artists, or politicians, for example, might seek to influence the public by emotional appeal, relying on the connotative power of symbols and metaphors rather than straightforward denotative communication. And the public, for the most part, could be counted on to respond emotionally, at least in Plato's estimation. These emotional responses seemed uncontrolled on the part of an audience, yet controllable by outside influences; audiences can be provoked toward emotional chaos, putting the public welfare at some risk.

Anything to do with affect would be better left to the philosopher, whether it was writing or speaking or otherwise manipulating the affective response of the audience. As Rosemary Harriott notes in Poetry and Criticism Before Plato, Plato's "knowledge" is the "prerogative of the philosopher" (83). This idea, that only philosophers have valid insight or true knowledge, seems to be at the root of Plato's distrust of artists, who openly profess to court emotional responses; it also explains why Plato could perform the very acts he denounced when they were performed by others. In sum, Plato's fear is that rational thinking would cease in individuals responding to the emotional appeals of non-philosophers.

Philosophers, however, were properly equipped to deal with emotional appeal and emotional response. Plato's Phaedrus, for example, is filled with comic touches which C. J. Rowe, in his introduction to the Phaedrus, calls "the deliberate playfulness which runs through the dialogue" (Plato 12). Playfulness has a strongly

affective function, intrinsically for the originator as well as extrinsically in its effect upon others. In the dialog, Socrates teases Phaedrus, poking fun at Phaedrus' emotional state over a speech made by Lysias. Lysias is the unscrupulous sort of speechwriter Plato railed against, one who would not hesitate to take advantage of an audience by emotional appeal. Because Phaedrus is so enamored of Lysias' speech, and of Lysias himself, Socrates' teasing provokes an emotionally defensive response from Phaedrus. Phaedrus responds to Socrates, "when you've made a speech different from Lysias' . . . which contains more and of greater value, then you'll stand in hammered metal beside the votive offering of the Cypselids at Olympia" (Plato 39). We know that Phaedrus is pouting here because his petulance prompts Socrates to taunt him further: "Have you been taking me seriously, Phaedrus, because I made my teasing attack on your darling? Do you think I would really try to say something different . . . to set beside his wisdom?" (Plato 39). Although it seems paradoxical that Socrates would take advantage of Phaedrus' emotional state in much the same way Lysias has, Socrates is a philosopher, nobly motivated; thus his emotional manipulation of Phaedrus is to be understood as instructive and good.

The superior position Plato ascribed to philosophers survives today in the form of the teacher's unassailable authority. Teachers, or other authorities, have acquired the reputation of having the answers, of knowing what things mean; thus it makes practical sense to expect teachers simply to tell their students what the teacher knows, to dispense with the pretense of a dialectical exercise. The philosopher using the dialectic, getting back to Plato's Phaedrus, seeks to educate by asking leading questions of a student, questions to which the philosopher knows the answers, knows what the hapless student is likely to say. The student, like the witness under cross-examination, is compelled to answer only the questions asked,

not venture into unasked territory. While the student does actively answer the question, the thinking remains limited to what is asked; thinking is passive in the sense that it leads to a predetermined place. But this passivity toward education, what many think of as a practical attitude, undermines the very essence of learning; that is, passivity denies the mental grappling with ideas and observations that characterize learning. I doubt whether actual learning can even be passive. This mental grappling requires the strength and support of one's affect, a discussion of which I take up later in this paper. For now, let me point out that passivity, which can be understood as blank or little affect, can be engendered by presuming that teachers or philosophers have the ultimate answers, that questions teachers ask in a dialectic would be trick questions, that the teacher knows what the answers to the questions are before asking them. Understanding that ultimate knowledge is not the possession of teachers or philosophers, and vitalizing one's affect, are necessary preconditions to an active education.

Passivity toward education and the modern view that the cognitive and affective dimensions are disparate constructs of intelligence, with cognition the more important of the two, may thus be an extension of Platonic disdain of emotional response in non-philosophers. We have separated affect from cognition, a necessary precondition for disfavoring one over the other. However, we seem to have been too hasty in fearing the affective dimension, for in backing away from it we have obscured its existence. In accepting Plato's point of view, in fearing the apparent lack of control that we may have over emotions, we have avoided dealing in a constructive way with emotion's persistent presence; with disdain followed by avoidance, affect becomes easier to ignore. Cognition has become instead the focus of attention, giving us a human function to study over which we do have apparent control. Cognitive studies are controllable, quantifiable, and have the

semblance of scientific truths. Nevertheless, in examining or teaching writing, a pursuit which usually requires the full use of the writer's cognitive as well as affective faculties, the exclusive focus on cognition denies a large part of the writer's intelligence: feeling.

Chapter 2.

Definition and Modern Perspectives

In learning to write, the affective dimension is inextricably bound with the cognitive in a mutually influential, dynamic relationship. The affective dimension is part of the writer and the individual's writing process; it is the part of intelligence or mentality that is comprised of how one feels, why one thinks.

The affective dimension does not exist as an isolable mental force, however. Affect and cognition co-occur, each in varying degrees depending on the individual circumstances. Wherever a cognitive skill is used, there is an affective impulse that helps prod it into action. Suppose we face the cognitive task of balancing a checkbook. To do so we must have the cognitive ability to add and subtract; we must know how to record the figures. Yet cognition is not the only mental function needed. Why balance the checkbook? Because we want to know how much money we have, because we feel responsible to live within our means? Wanting and feeling are hallmarks of affect. If we suppose we might have a purely cognitive reason, it is still our affect that tells us so, that tells us our cognition is pure, that compels us to evaluate our thinking. Similarly in composition, affect is often the force behind why we think what we do, why we make the rhetorical decisions we do, why we write, why we use varying processes to compose; affect is part of us and part of the process we use to write.

At the invention stage of a writing process, where a writer's experiences can serve as resource material, the affective dimension is especially apparent. One's experiences are colored by feelings and interpretations; one's feelings and interpretations are, in turn, colored by experiences. Even if one is not writing about

one's feelings, they affect the choices made in writing, whether subject, tone, level of diction. Besides experience, other invention techniques or resources are affectively colored. If the writer gathers information, affective impulses influence at least the order of each item's importance. If the writer invents by freewriting, the affective dimension is heavily drawn on, freed from cognitive demands as much as possible.

After invention, in mid-process composing and in revision, the writer must be sensitive to the rhetorical needs of the reader on several different levels. The writer must imagine how the reader would respond; the writer must be able to gauge and empathize with the reader's response. The writer must call on affective faculties, as well as cognitive ones, to project that, say, statement X might alienate the reader, while statement X with qualification Y might succeed in involving the reader. Affective skills also allow us to differentiate between multiple readers because affect is what partly makes each reader respond differently. Cognitive skills allow the writer to say something accurately; affective skills allow the writer to say something effectively or ineffectively, to say it in different ways, whether strongly, subtly, vaguely or pointedly.

Throughout the composing process, the writer must be sensitive to the needs of self, in addition to the rhetorical needs of the reader. Balancing self needs against the reader's needs requires affective skill. If the writer favors self-satisfaction, the composition may turn out to be self-indulgent or meaningless to the reader. If the writer over-emphasizes the needs of the reader, then the composition may sound voiceless or detached from the writer. Affective skill allows the writer to weigh the demands made, to perceive them, and ultimately to choose what to do with them.

Another feature of the affective dimension is the significance of a written text, the fact of its existence. As Mina Shaughnessy says, writing "is, above all, an act of confidence, an assertion of the importance of what has gone on inside the writer, an exhibition of his thoughts or experiences" (Errors 85). The presence of the text presupposes the importance of what the writer says (or wants to say, since the text might not succeed in expressing what the writer intends).

Clearly then, any perceptions of the affective dimension that deny its centrality in composition also deny a writer full use of mental power. Despite this hazard, some modern perceptions of the affective dimension regard it as simply behavior, transform affect into malleable numbers which reduce individuality to statistical probability, or limit the importance of affect to the writer's experience apart from the actual working with words on paper. Other perceptions, which I discuss later, more fully acknowledge the importance of the affective dimension.

Affect as Behavior

Feelings are no different than physical behaviors in that both are responses to environmental provocation, according to the point of view of "radical behaviorism," as explained by Donald Baer in his essay, "What is an Attribution that Thou Art Mindful of It?" (272). Baer discusses attributions (teacher's or student's explanations for the actions or attitudes of the other) and expectations as hidden behaviors which "respond to environmental contingencies just as do overt behaviors" (272). Following Baer's reasoning, the feelings and attitudes that mark attributions and expectations are not part of a separate affective dimension; they are simply covert effects brought on by overt causes. Baer acknowledges the existence of invisible, covert feelings but asserts that these are no different functionally than observable behaviors. Thus, in the behaviorist paradigm the affective dimension does not really exist as I have described it, but as a model of a

stimulus-response behavior; any other psychological dimension, including the cognitive, also functions in stimulus-response fashion.

The danger of the radical behaviorist view point for the field of composition is as extreme as the theory itself. Emotions, desires, needs become as mechanistic as involuntary reflexes. In behaviorism, even voluntary actions do not occur without some external prod. Thus, complex feelings are the same as complicated reactions; as such, complex feelings have no greater significance than complicated reactions, according to Baer.

Another danger that follows the mechanistic reduction of feeling is the denial of mental autonomy. According to the behaviorist model, one does not generate or grapple with ideas or feelings; one merely reacts to external stimulation. The problem for the student writer is that the behaviorist scheme denies self-control over one's feelings, which in turn encourages passivity. If one's feelings are only responses to environmental stimuli, and if the environment of the writing process does not engender useful stimuli, then one's affect cannot be marshalled for use by the writer; one's affective responses can only be endured. If the writing proceeds in a quiet, plain room, there is even less possibility of external stimulation of feeling; the writing produced in such an environment would be similarly devoid of feeling, of any indication that a sentient being was the author.

Affect as Statistical Probability

Like the behaviorist model, analytical studies of composition pedagogy tend to deny affect as functioning in a separate dimension. Where behaviorism sees affect as simply as covert behavior, statistical analyses group affective phenomena with cognitive events. Also, statistical analyses quantify affect, seeking to present numerically a quality of feeling. Quantification requires, it seems, the

simplification and alteration of complex feeling into discrete units in order to accomplish statistical analysis.

One such study is Arthur N. Applebee's Contexts for Learning to Write, which details the state of composition pedagogy in high schools. The study relies heavily on statistical data to examine the relationship between pedagogical tools and the quality of writing which students are able to produce. Applebee statistically analyzes "Mean Percent of Textbook Exercises Requiring Extended Writing," "Teacher-as-Examiner in Textbook Exercises," and more, generating tables of information of measurable, concrete details which he then uses to describe the pedagogical situation (ix-xi).

Primarily affective information is similarly tabulated, though it is not distinguished as "affective," or as otherwise different from the tables of other facts. Some of the primarily affective material is gathered in "Student Reports of Attitudes Toward Specific Writing Tasks" where the feeling of writers toward their writing assignments--a function of affect--is coded as either "perfunctory" or "involved" (109). The two designations seem to imply that more complex attitudes, say, "daunted" or "somewhat interested," or attitudes which change over time, can be fitted into one of two categories. Also, in "Student Reports of Classroom Discussion," where affect should function as a mediating or shaping force, the table lists only the names of six topics and matches them with "mean percent of papers"; no mention is made of the affective influences on classroom discussion (105). And writers' self-analyses of their own composing processes, which, by their individual nature, should be heavily influenced by affect, are reduced to ten phrases of one or two words each in "Writing Processes Reported on Papers for Selected Subjects" (113).

The implication that affect is quantifiable is a serious problem with statistical analysis. This implication leads to another problem: if affect is in fact quantifiable, then it is also objectifiable. Feelings become externalized data, disconnectable, impersonal items; this is, of course, the direct opposite of the nature of feeling.

Either of these two results of statistically analyzed affect is fundamentally dehumanizing because they deny individuality. What makes any material suitable for tabulation is, after all, the degree of its sameness with other material, a common denominator. Also important to statistical analysis is the narrowness of descriptive labels; thus, complex feelings, like one's attitude toward one's writing process, become pared down to misleadingly finite phrases which give a falsely simplistic impression of the mental engagement one must have with writing.

In some way, narrowing the affective dimension to a point where it could be statistically analyzed may make it easier to study, but in limiting affect to the characteristics of statistics we disfigure affect, so that we end up studying statistics, not affect. As researcher Mike Rose says, "there comes a point past which the limiting of a problem changes the problem" ("Complexity" 228).

Affect as Limited Experience

Limiting a problem is a positive step in the direction of solving the problem, but several perceptions of affect, which I present in this section, limit the affective dimension of composition too narrowly. The limits seem to be in place not to facilitate understanding but to suggest a boundary to the function of affect, beyond which cognition takes over. One point of view sees affect as functioning separately from cognition, occurring in the stages of composition apart from the actual writing; others treat affect as peripheral to cognition, indirectly connected to the process of writing. The indirect perceptions present a largely negative picture of affect, focusing on writer's block and avoidance strategies, as does the perception that

affect is largely motivational, focusing on the derailing power of writing apprehension. Another limiting view divides affective responses into two categories, transient (or situational) and dispositional. This view focuses on the dispositional emotions, fully dismissing the significance of the transient responses. Finally, I discuss the notion that the significance of affect is merely developmental, something we jettison when we reach maturity.

Affect as Very Separate from Cognition

Reed Larson, in his essay "Emotional Scenarios in the Writing Process: An Examination of Young Writers' Affective Experiences," seems at first to treat the affective dimension of composition as an omnipresent quality of the writing process. Larson identifies the emotions experienced by writers of better and poorer papers, finding that the two groups each have characteristic feelings that contrast with those of the other. Yet Larson ultimately separates cognition from affect in such a way as to suggest that affect occurs extraneously to cognition.

There is much that is valuable in Larson's findings. In terms of how students feel toward their work in progress, Larson documents that the more successful writers experienced enjoyment toward their work and were involved with their material. In contrast, the less successful writers felt either boredom or anxiety; they had a general inability to control the level of their involvement with their work so that they became either too little involved or too much.

Larson's work in documenting what students go through when writing well and writing poorly is an important first step in realizing the importance of the affective dimension; it is even more important in pointing to ways which our knowledge of affect can be used to help teach. However, Larson's definition of affect undermines its importance in composition by implying that affect occurs separately, before cognition. He divides writing into "two sets of mental processes,"

cognitive being the set of "rational processes of ordering words and ideas on the page" and affective processes being the feelings, impulses, and drives that co-occur in a writer's experience" (20). One implication of such a schism is that the "real" work of writing, that is managing words and ideas on paper, is and should be purely rational. From this perspective, the affective dimension, because it seems wholly different from "ordering of words," becomes extraneous to writing. If affect is in fact extraneous to the "rational processes" of writing, then perhaps feelings are better left ignored; why not skip them and get to the words on the page directly?

Larson also describes emotional aspects of the writing process as either "facilitative" or as "[disruptive] of intellectual work" (20). In this description, affect is either friend or foe, not really part of the individual but external, at least to cognition. Again cognition seems isolated, enshrined as the engine of the intellect, with the affective dimension serving as fuel additives, not really necessary, but available.

Affect as Peripheral to Cognition

In a closer relationship to cognition than the "co-occurrence" noted above, Mike Rose's studies of writer's block show affect as sometimes melding with cognition. In Sondra Perl's study of basic writer's composing processes, affect also appears as a sometimes more integrated force. In the comments Rose and Perl make to set up their studies, and in the evidence of their students' rigidity toward composition, the importance of the affective dimension is apparent. It is in student interviews with the researchers, however, where the importance of affect is fully realized.

Rose sets up his work with writer's block with general observations about composition which indicate the presence of the affective dimension. In his preface to When A Writer Can't Write, Rose notes that "composing is marked by . . .

gnawing feelings of inadequacy"; "Inner conflicts," he adds, "manifest themselves in jumbled syntax and unclear diction" (ix). Here, the affective dimension looms large in the background of composition as both an atmospheric phenomenon and as a shaping force visible in the written product. Rose's statements show the negative side of affect, a fitting introduction to work on writer's block. This down side of affect, however, shows only part of the significance of affect.

In beginning her report, Perl notes some positive qualities of affect, relative to research and teaching in general. Perl notes that "rapport and trust are necessary for case study . . . research"; towards that end, she chose students from her own classes whom she was already "working with, relating to and getting to know . . . in the daily interactive manner that enhances teaching" (17). Though Perl does not specify that the affective characteristics of working with or relating to an individual are key, clearly it is affect that marks enhancement of teaching. The connection of these affective qualities to composition specifically can be established where successful teaching depends on working with and relating to individual writers. Student writers must reciprocate in maintaining this affective connection in two ways: they must relate to their teachers and to the audience they imagine for their work. Perl's purpose, however, is not to identify the various forms in which the affective dimension can appear. She merely points out the enhancements as a caveat to counteract objections to, or explain the subjectivity of, research involving one's own students.

The central findings of Rose and Perl show affect as disruptive of cognition, sometimes invading from the periphery to stymie cognition. In both studies, affect appears as the student's emotional rigidity toward various aspects of composition. Rose's students cling to erroneous rules to such a degree that the students become

unable to write. Perl's students avoid writing by setting up emotionally based obstacles which make writing progress especially difficult.

The problem Rose's students have is the emotional rigidity with which they cling to compositional rules. Writing becomes a rule to be followed, not a flexible or dynamic means of expression or communication. The utter contrast of rigid thinking and the flexible thinking characteristic of writing highlights the psychological conflict, the affective problem, of the blocked writer. The affective dimension is further underscored by Rose's assertion that these rules "are easily replaced with or counterbalanced by fundamental ones if there is no emotional reason to hold onto that which simply doesn't work" ("Rigid Rules" 399). And there's the rub: if there is no emotional reason to maintain rigid belief, then there would be no blocking.

Blocking is a typical defense we have against too great psychological pain. We can also protect ourselves by denying that we even have ideas or opinions to write about; another strategy is to deny that what we think is worth writing about. Emotional rigidity could lead also to avoiding writing, yet another psychological defense we can employ when writing brings on a conflict too painful to bear. Perl finds, for example, that the premature and constant editing her students do while writing have "the effect of side tracking, of busying students with the more superficial aspects of writing Here editing becomes a strategy for avoiding writing" (29). In avoiding writing, or blocking altogether the ability to write, the affective dimension plays a particularly central role, a defensive role which protects the individual from psychological pain.

An extended role of affect emerges in Rose's discussion of the benefits his interviews had for his students, apart from the cognitive instruction they received. Perl's interviews were of a different nature, serving primarily as a means to observe

the writing processes her basic writers use. Noting any progress her students made was beyond the scope of her study; she does not report any changes in her students as a result of the interviews.

Most of Rose's one-to-one interviews resulted in instructional gains for his blocked writers. Some of the students dropped their dysfunctional rules after the interview with Rose revealed their presence and insidiousness. Rose says the students' changed because they learned, in the interview, that rules should not be blindly followed, but considered carefully. It would be revealing to ask these now-unblocked students what specifically about the interview helped them. I suspect part of the benefit derives from the interview situation itself. In this sort of interview, the student writers describe their writing processes and are not judged or criticized. Having someone listen, show interest, give feedback, or show empathy provides an individual with emotional support, even if indirectly; a student would likely feel validated as a competent thinker, empowered with self-possessed capabilities. Thus, a student's self-concept as a writer will likely be positively bolstered and affirmed because the nature of this interview assumes a non-judgmental relationship between the interviewer and student, on the level of writer-to-writer.

Rose explains that one of his students did not unblock after an interview with him. In Rose's words, "Her case . . . reminds us that the cognitive often melds with and can be overpowered by the affective," ("Rigid Rules," 400; emphasis added). But is it possible for any cognitive process to be devoid of affective influences? A similar attempt at separating concepts which actually are complementary exists in the usual distinction made between objectivity and subjectivity, that objective observations are devoid of personal bias while subjective ones are colored by opinion. Yet no matter how objective we think we are,

choosing to set up a research project one way and not another, for example, or choosing to follow a particular thought pattern and not another, marks a subjective distinction. The point to be made, aside from the issue of preciseness of language and the reality we wish it to describe, is that if cognitive processes are said to often meld, instead of necessarily meld with affective processes then that description is incomplete. The affective dimension of the writing process is just that--a dimension, part of the process, an interwoven complement of the cognitive dimension and vice versa.

Affect as Primarily Motivational

A writer must want to write, or at the very least value the activity, as John Daly says in his essay on writing apprehension. He adds that "A positive attitude about writing is associated with, and may even be a critical precursor of, the successful development and maintenance of writing skills" (44). Daly focuses on the attitudes of writers, those attitudes which psychologists call "dispositional," which reflect enduring characteristics, or traits, of the writer as an individual. (The distinction between dispositional and situational attitudes has serious implications, which I discuss in the next section.)

Writing apprehension is just one of many possible personality traits. Daly notes that "writing apprehension is conceived of as a relatively enduring disposition" (47). Writing apprehension in the context of personality traits has led researchers to develop a broader connection of writing apprehension to many "personality variables," among them gender and self-esteem (47).

Ironically, this extended correlation of writing apprehension to many personality variables does little to specifically connect affect in general to writing. The apprehension construct as discussed by Daly links affect to personality, but relative to writing, apprehension remains an amorphous abstraction in control of a

writer's enjoyment or dread of writing, in control of a writer's motivation. For a writer to reverse the situation and seize control of this part of affect seems difficult, perhaps futile. This notion suggests that our affect controls us, that we are limited by our emotions instead of in control of them.

Affect as Situational

The distinction between situational emotional responses and those which come from one's personality, or the dispositional emotions, may be important conceptually and pedagogically, "for we have a tendency to make generalizations about people's emotional responses from limited observations" (Rose, "Complexity" 235). Rose goes on to say that the understanding that "Emotional reactions are more often than not specific to the situation and are not evidence of general affective traits . . . should be central to our theory building as well as to our teaching" (235). Rose's warning is sound and rational; it presents, however, a temptation for another human tendency besides generalization.

There is a tendency to apply such dicta as ". . . should be central" in a tunnel-vision manner, so that "central" comes to mean "the only idea." Situational affective responses, because they are transient, are in fact worthy of investigation. They point up the variability of writing contexts, and for this reason at least, the situational responses compel further investigation.

Imagine, for example, an assignment to write an essay discussing an object that has no apparent monetary value, only personal value; the writer will need to describe the object and explain or discuss why it is personally important. Suppose a student given this assignment has an attack of anxiety, eventually settling into apathy. The student's rough draft, really only an array of incomplete thoughts, describes broadly an object that could belong to anyone; the notes are devoid of personal involvement or interest in the thing or the paper. The final draft is little

more than a typed version of the rough draft. There are some serious problems with the student in this situation, perhaps the inability to express personal thoughts in writing, the lack of an abstract sense of personal value, the inability to apply abstract concepts from concrete details, or an inability to function in higher-level thinking. But if the student does better on other assignments, those which require less personal involvement, then the problems with the first one are likely to be overlooked as merely transient. Since few people react the same way to different situations, most affective responses to writing situations will be transient. Thus, the profession has been able to ignore the study of the affective dimension of writing except where students' develop deep and persistent problems. Waiting for these problems to become deep and persistent may in fact facilitate their depth and persistence.

The scenario outlined above is not hypothetical. Yolanda, a student who I present in greater detail in chapter 3, found herself with the same assignment. She was extraordinarily detached from what she wrote, a troubling state especially since the assignment called for personal attachment. In conference she could verbalize some interesting and important insights about her feelings toward this object, her car. Yolanda's car meant her independence, since with it she was able to go where and when she pleased, and it represented a kind of family continuity since it had been her mother's first car. Yet what she had written was a bland description that could have applied to almost anything with four wheels belonging to anybody else. She orally described the value of independence, that is, she said, "Now I can go places without having to ask anyone to take me," but when I offered her the word "independence" as something to explore in her essay, she said "No, it's [the car] not really that important." I asked her if it was taken from her how would she feel, wouldn't she miss it, wouldn't she miss independence, wouldn't she be upset? "I

suppose. No, not really. It's just a car." She talked herself out of her feelings when it came down to writing them. A comment made by her instructor about Yolanda as a student is very telling: "Yolanda doesn't seem to be really here (in class)." Her affect is nearly blank, giving the impression of an incomplete person, at least when she's in composition class; and hers is not an unusual case. Most teachers have witnessed a student's simultaneous physical presence and emotional absence. The prevalence of this schism alone mandates detailed research into the affective dimension of writing, demands the attention of the academic community toward how students feel and why they feel the way they do.

Affect as Developmental

Apart from the work of Rose, Perl, Daly, and Shaughnessy noted above, who studied college writers, research interest in the affective dimension of composition in post-high school writers is relatively low; general interest in the affective dimension of adult writers' composing is almost nil. The bulk of affectively based research--and instructional--interest lies with the development of children, their emotional growth as connected to their learning to write.

In this category, attention to the affective dimension is treated as a stage of mental growth. Some children's writing assignments focus on tapping their affective selves. Kenneth Koch's book, for example, Wishes, Lies and Dreams, focuses ostensibly on helping children write poetry. Through poetry writing, children gain access to the richness of language through enjoyment and play with language. The affective dimension of this type of writing is the means by which these writers succeed. Another example, Rosemary Colwell's essay, "Don't Forget the Human Touch," concerns the affective dimension of learning in general, making a plea for teachers of first-graders to incorporate acknowledgement of their students' feelings into their classwork; she illustrates how she uses specific writing assignments to

provide this "human touch." (Her students each take home the class teddy bear for a weekend and then write about the experience, real or imagined, including a character study of the bear, as each child imagines it.)

While Koch and Colwell's work focus on specific applications of the affective dimension of composition, other work defines boundaries of affective functions. For example, the limitation of the affective dimension to the beginnings of emotional growth is a feature of Peggy Jolly's essay, "Meeting the Challenge of Developmental Writers." Jolly uses the developmental stages of Piaget to suggest that experiences which involve the ego, which are self-referential, mark the beginning of mental development; the individual has reached maturity when able to synthesize abstractions, seen as principally a cognitive achievement. If the ego embodies affect, and abstractions embrace cognition, then one can infer that a mature individual has little need or use for affect. What Jolly makes of Piaget's schedule is that "the final stage of cognitive development . . . is usually not present until late adolescence and may be delayed if the individual has not been challenged to examine or to defend her thoughts and actions or has passively accepted what she has seen or heard without trying to understand its implications" (33). In other words, Jolly seems to be saying that affect promotes cognition, providing the impetus to defend cognitive challenges, or hobbles cognitive development if it is passive about such defense. According to Jolly, affect seems to function prior to the "final stage of cognitive development," influencing it but fading away once cognitive development has matured. Thus, moving beyond the affective dimension, in Jolly's depiction, seems to be a measure of competency; for more competent individuals, affect has diminished importance. Jolly's interpretation marginalizes the affective dimension, thus making the study or discussion of affective experiences out of place relative to higher level expository writing.

The focus of these studies, particularly the circumstance of their representing the bulk of affective research, implies that affective responses are experienced by novices or children only, that emotions should be tapped only as a prologue to more important, or more mature, kinds of writing. The lack of similar work focusing on older writers implies that the affective dimension becomes unimportant in more experienced writers. At some point in their education, research seems to be saying, students no longer need a "human touch." The apparent withholding of emotional acknowledgement from young adults and older individuals is inherently isolating; isolation presents a serious conflict with at least the communicative impulse to write.

The perception of affect as limited to the beginnings of individual development may be a result of attempting to broaden our students' awareness of the world beyond the bounds of their egos; we want our children to grow emotionally by admitting the concerns of others into their regard. But by downplaying emotions as our children mature, we risk delivering the message that emotions should be abandoned altogether. Denial of feelings, whether in composition class or in a larger community, can lead to diverse emotional problems, from having "nothing to say" to judging one's ideas as "dumb" or "no good" to a general lack of self-esteem.

In chapter 3, I discuss the seriousness of affective denial in greater detail; the seriousness becomes more apparent in light of the research perspectives that more fully acknowledge the importance of the affective dimension, also taken up in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Comprehensive Perspectives on the Affective Dimension and the Impact of Denial

Having explained research perspectives which considered the affective dimension in a limited or negating way, in this chapter I will examine more comprehensive perspectives on the affective dimension. Some of these perspectives deal with affect as a necessary feature of general intelligence; the work of Howard Gardner, for example, establishes that the influence of others is critical to our self-concepts and part of being human. Other of these perspectives focus on the centrality of affect to learning, particularly the affective impact teachers generally have on their students. The affective dimension is specifically applied to composition in Brannon and Knoblauch's work on the impact composition teachers have on their students and in Brand and Powell's work identifying the role of emotion in writing.

The points of view I discussed in the previous chapter limit or negate the importance of the affective dimension. Those perspectives have had, and continue to have, profound effects. To put these effects in context, I contrast them with the more comprehensive views of affect presented in this chapter. I also discuss the result of limiting or denying affect generally, as well as the consequences specific to learning. I cite the work of Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia, which shows how affect functions in two kinds of learning, one which makes full use of the affective dimension, resulting in more independent learning, and the other, which ignores affect, resulting in dependent learning. Case studies of student writers I

have worked with illustrate the result the limited perceptions of affect have had on students.

Affect as a Feature of Intelligence and Learning

Comprehensive perspectives of affect, like the following, view affect as an essential faculty, at least as important a part of intelligence as cognition. The following perspectives also identify components of affect which are particularly in sync with cognition, a relationship which largely defines intelligence and learning.

At the beginning of chapter 1, I said that people do not reason without feeling. A component of feeling, or affect, is the influence others have on our self-concepts. Educational psychologist Vernon Allen goes so far as to state that "it is a truism in social science that to a very large extent one's self perception rests upon the responses received from others" (378). Howard Gardner similarly views the reciprocal roles of self and others. In Frames of Mind, he writes, "the fact that one is a unique individual of feelings and striving, who must rely on others to furnish the tasks and to judge one's achievements--is an ineluctable aspect of the human condition and one firmly rooted in our species membership" (254).

An important function of this affective reliance on others' responses is that it allows communities to form, allows individuals to group around some commonality, whether common beliefs, common interests, or common knowledge. Further, these communities inform our decisions regarding these beliefs, interests, and knowledge. The influence of others and the communities we align with are part of a mirror we hold up to ourselves when we look for a measure of self-worth.

Of course, affect is not an isolable force. Neither is affect the only reflection we see in the mirror; we also receive cognitive information. Cognition gives us some facts about the image in the mirror: these beliefs fall into that category, these interests are shared by that group, this knowledge teaches me these things. Thus, it

is our affect that tells us what to make of the facts, the cognitive information. Full-functioning intelligence, then, requires the affective dimension to shape cognition, to progress mentally in any way. Thus, it should come as no surprise that learning too is subject to the same affective shaping.

As interconnected as affect is to cognition, our sensitivity to the responses of others demonstrates the significance of affect to the learning situation. Teachers are among those others who influence students' self-concepts; the younger student, especially, is subject to the heavy influence of the instructor's authority. In his essay, "Social Comparison and Education," John Levine asserts that "student self-perception [is] informed by verbal and non-verbal teacher evaluation and social comparison--students compare themselves to other students in part to reduce the discomfort of 'cognitive uncertainty'" (29). Learning theorist Jerome S. Bruner notes too that the "teacher can become part of the students' internal dialogue" (124). Not only are we influenced by others, but we actively seek others out. We look for responses from others to identify ourselves.

How we react to this feedback is another important function of affect. To return to the school setting, the students' reaction, or attitude, must be an open one. Bruner states that learning cannot take place in someone who is "strongly driven" or overly anxious (50-53). A heavily negative attitude, for example, must be adjusted before the student can effectively receive any new information.

Given the presence of all this influencing, responding, reacting, comparing, feeling going on, it is essential to make room for it in our theories and pedagogies. Benjamin S. Bloom, et al., have similarly strong feelings on the subject. In their Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning, they write: "there is no reason teachers cannot treat affective information the way it is handled in a counselor-counselee relationship" (236); it should be handled because

affective information exists. The following are theories which do represent affect as a full partner of cognition in composition.

Affect as a Feature of Composition

A detailed understanding of how affect functions generally in composition is described in the study conducted by Alice G. Brand and Jack Powell. The work of Lil Brannon and C. H. Knoblauch further shows a specific application of the affective dimension; they discuss the affective dimension in terms of the students' ownership of their own texts. Reed Larson, whose conclusions I discussed in chapter 2 as ultimately externalizing affect from individuals, presents the cases of students involved in major writing projects. In these case histories we can see the affective dimension short-circuited.

Brand and Powell's study "reports a first systematic effort to describe the emotions involved in writing" (280). In "Emotions and the Writing Process: A Description of Apprentice Writers," they investigate the "change in emotions during the writing process and . . . the variables associated with emotional intensity and emotional change" (281). Citing Rose's work with writer's block, Daly and Miller's work with writing apprehension, Bloom and Holladay's work with writing anxiety and more, Brand and Powell point out that when the affective dimension of writing is "studied, it is studied as disruptive of the process" (280). Brand and Powell note that "No research has been carried out on composing using a more balanced spectrum of emotions. No research describes the impact on writing of the positive affects, the negative affects, or the positive aspects of negative affects . . . no single instrument inventories a balanced range of emotions associated with the process" (280). Apparently emotions are slippery things, hard to pin down with the absoluteness seemingly required by statistical analysis or scientific inquiry, as I have noted in chapter 2. Yet, as Brand and Powell state, both the importance of

"cognition to written discourse" and the "importance of emotion to cognition" have been established (280). Brand herself completed another paper, "The Why of Cognition: Emotion and the Writing Process," where she explores the question of where affect does fit in the composing process. Her work points to the difficulty of determining where affect fits because the question implies that affect fits in one spot and not another, which is simply not the case. As I have discussed, cognitive processes are part of the sense we make of the world, the substance of the meaning we attach to what we perceive, as I have discussed above; this meaning, in turn, is "saturated with affect. But the profession sidesteps this" (Brand 437).

In looking closely at this relationship between affect and cognition, Brand and Powell together find that the skill level of student writers "influences the intensity" of the emotions ranged as Positive (e.g., excited, happy, relieved), Negative Passive (e.g., ashamed, bored, depressed), and Negative Active (e.g., anxious, frustrated, angry) (283). However, an important facet of the skill level's influence was "whether the skill was determined by the instructor or by the individual writer" (283). Their findings dramatize what I have noted above, that our self-concepts are influenced by others.

In "Students' Rights to Their Own Texts," Brannon and Knoblauch take up another issue in the relationship between student and teacher. Brannon and Knoblauch show that typically, in teaching writing, the

teacher-reader assumes primary control of the choices that writers make, feeling perfectly free to 'correct' those choices any time an apprentice deviates from the teacher-reader's conception of what the developing text 'ought' to look like or 'ought' to be doing. Hence, the teacher more often than the student determines what the writing will be about, the form it will take, and the criteria that will determine its success (158).

What Brannon and Knoblauch have described is inattention to the affective dimension. The "choices that writers make," the determination of subject, form,

and evaluative criteria, are made possible by the writers' affect. As I stated above, cognition presents the available choices; affect allows us to do something with those choices. As students' choices dwindle so does affect. If the choices are made by someone else, the student has less to work with. Even Rose's "primarily cognitive" approach to writer's block, which describes a thwarted composing process, could be understood as a perceived limitation of choices; the writer's rigidity toward rules has narrowed the choices to the ones that don't work. The blank affect some students show, which I discuss in greater detail below, may be a response to the truncated availability of choices. Thus, as a comprehensive feature of composition, the affective dimension can be understood as strongly connected to the choices writers make.

Where Brannon and Knoblauch describe the usurping of writers' choices, Larson presents a case where the student was allowed to make his own choices, but in an anxious state. Larson studied the emotions of students writing, correlating extreme anxiety with less successful writing. This student received the comment on his paper that "much greater care was needed here in the proofreading than you were willing to give" (26). The teacher had no awareness of the student's extreme anxiety, over-care, as it were. The teacher identified the unsuccessful choices the writer made, commenting further that the "paper tackles far too much . . . you skip around your topic with no thoroughness focused on any major part" (26). But, by that point, the teacher could not help the student with those unfortunate choices; the project was over.

A subtle message emerges from such comments. With the force of evaluation, the teacher's interpretation likely becomes the element most important to the student. The student's anxiety remains unperceived, unimportant, and thus untreatable. And if the teacher's comment is as mismatched to the situation as the

one above, the subtle message is that the student is not being heard or understood, or that the student's feelings do not matter. In this case, mid-process conferences or feedback could have prevented much of the misunderstanding; a discussion with the student would reveal that the paper "attempts to cover a broad span of material and thus relies on grand leaps in the attempt to pull things together. There is no clear focus" (Larson 26). Larson adds that the student "put in lots of time and effort, but his . . . anxiety kept him from getting any distance on what he was writing" (26). Instead of seeing the many surface errors as a sign of an uncaring writer, they could indicate, as Shaughnessy says, and as Larson's case study bears out, an anxious writer, or one whose thoughts are not fully developed.

The notion of caring about what one writes is a misleadingly simple axiom describing a complex phenomenon. As Brannon and Knoblauch point out, typical teaching methods take control of students' writing, leaving them with little to care about, or, as in Larson's example, these methods allow the teacher to assume that the student must not care if the product is extremely flawed, not realizing the flaws were signs that the writer was floundering in care.

Caring is misunderstood because affect is misunderstood. In the following quote from Phyllis C. Blumenfeld et al., a limited understanding of the affective dimension, particularly caring, is apparent. In "Teacher Talk and Student Thought: Socialization into the Student Role," they write: "The American school is thus much like the American factory, in that the small workers whose product is themselves need good managers in order either to turn out a good product or to care about the production process" (189). In factories, workers turn out identical products; caring about the product or the process of manufacture amounts to concern for meeting the criteria of "good" and "like other products." Thus caring about the likeness of products, analogous in Blumenfeld's factory to the affective dimension in

composition, is more important than individual concerns, or choices, for the process or product. The individual writer/worker fades into the background in this picture.

Manifestations of Affect

Thus far, I have discussed various perspectives that generally diminished the significance of the affective dimension. With the exception of Brand and Powell's study, Brannon and Knoblauch's work, and the psychological and educational studies discussed in this chapter, most perspectives view affect as nothing if not cognition, or as separate from cognition, or as a developmental stage of cognition, and so on. I have also shown studies which describe indifference or ignorance of affect's importance. The students taught from these perspectives are largely taught to bury or ignore their feelings.

The effects of suppressing affect in learning or in composition are the same as in other aspects of life. An initial discussion of the effect seen in general situations will help put into context the specific effects of learning and composition theories. Psychologists have observed that children who are continually compelled to bury or ignore their feelings, as often happens, for example, when living with an alcoholic parent, lose the ability to recognize the content or source of their feelings; as adults, they may present a blank affect, as though nothing interests or moves them. Losing the connection with one's feelings is a learned response to the constant denial of those feelings, an attempt at survival in the face of threats to one's self-esteem. Psychologist Claudia Black identifies a source of denial as "family laws" which stipulate, "don't talk, don't trust, don't feel," often in force in the families of alcoholics. Further, in "Individual Education: An Application of Adler's Personality Theory," Paul Clark points out that one of Alfred Adler's basic truths is that everyone has feelings of inferiority. Adler, one of educational psychology's most important theorists, holds that "a child with such feelings [of inferiority] may accept

suggestions that he/she is bad or stupid and become convinced that the teacher is right," or that some other authority figure who conveys these suggestions is right (35). Inasmuch as ignoring the affective dimension of composing involves ignoring feelings, living year after year with a strictly cognitive approach to a cognitive/affective endeavor is like living with an alcoholic parent; after all, "emotions are implicated in virtually all human behavior" (Brand and Powell 280). Bruner too discusses the "crippling effect of deprived human environments The principal deficits appear to be linguistic in the broadest sense--the lack of opportunity to share in dialogue" (28-29). Dialogue is utterly important to full human functioning. A thwarted dialogue is similar to denied communication, with similar detriments. As I will show later with Bennett Simon's work, being misunderstood or inaccurately perceived is tantamount to isolation or exclusion from the group the writer seeks to communicate with; the word "communicate" itself indicates an establishment of, or a desire to establish, community.

Denying students control over the developing text removes a crucial incentive to write and to improve writing, for "it is precisely the chance to accomplish one's own purposes by controlling one's own choices that creates incentive to write" (159). According to Brannon and Knoblauch, denial of student control can take the form of "elaborate corrections" which appropriate the students' text (158). Brannon and Knoblauch add that "this correcting," though it seems to be "showing the discrepancy between what the writing has actually achieved and what the ideal writing ought to look like," also "tends to show students that the teacher's agenda is more important than their own, that what they wanted to say is less relevant than the teacher's impression of what they should have said" (158). In other words, the comparison of agendas leads to the students' becoming preoccupied with "what the teacher wants."

The difference in agendas seems readily perceptible to students. Brannon and Knoblauch write:

Once students perceive this shift of agenda, their motives for writing also shift: the task is now to match the writing to expectations that lie beyond their own sense of their intention and method. . . . they are forced to concede the reader's authority and to make guesses about what they can and cannot say. One consequence is often a diminishing of students' commitment to communicate ideas that they value and even a diminishing of the incentive to write (159).

In addition to diminishing such affective concerns as commitment, value, and incentive, another consequence of the shift in the agenda is confusion about the intended audience for the writing. Inasmuch as the writer imagines an audience, or imagines the potential responses and characteristics of a personally known audience, the perception of the audience is colored by the writer's individuality, influenced by the writer's thoughts and feelings. However, the teacher-reader, as described by Brannon and Knoblauch, usurps the function of a particular audience. The teacher reading as a teacher, that is, the teacher reading for correctness, takes over the role of audience but does not act with the responses a true audience would have, as long as correctness remains the primary goal of response. Nor is the teacher who reads as a teacher acting like a real reader, one who reads for understanding. This blending of the functions of teacher, audience, and reader must surely confuse the student, who, "writing to expectations" must now juggle the implicit demands of three forces meshed imperceptibly, and falsely, as one. This confounding of responses, too, further alienates the student from the writing. For that reason alone, the writer's individuality should be openly acknowledged as the legitimate source of the writing; in the words of Brannon and Knoblauch, "we ought to relinquish our control of student writing and return it to the writers: doing so will not only improve student incentive to write, but will also make our responses to the writing more pertinent" (161). Thus, by ignoring the existence of the way students

feel about themselves particularly as writers, as demonstrated by Brand and Powell, or by denying students the opportunity to write like real writers by appropriating their texts, as shown by Brannon and Knoblauch, traditional composition pedagogy delivers the message that how students feel is unimportant, not worth studying, not part of the real writing process. To survive as a student, then, it makes sense to bury those feelings or ignore them. But, unfortunately, this burying or ignoring feelings often results in a blank affect, the apparent absence of feeling in an individual.

Many basic writers I've worked with exhibit this phenomenon, a blank affect, as do some more advanced writers. As the following case studies show, dysfunctional affect is clearly related to previous writing and learning experience, more than it is to skill level or even social maturity. These are some of the students¹ I have tutored one-on-one who present themselves as having little or no affect.

When faced with an assignment to write about a time when misunderstood on the basis of a superficial feature (such as race, gender, accent, age) Yolanda, a 17 year old black female living in Loma Linda, said she never had such an experience. I first mentioned Yolanda in chapter 2 in the discussion of situational vs. dispositional emotion. With Yolanda's low level of affect, the distinction of emotional duration becomes hardly relevant, even distracting from more important issues, such as her disdain of writing. She also seemed unaffected by the experiences of others when I told her about the topics other students had chosen; she remained quiet, softly smiling now and then as though humoring me. At one point she said, in a barely audible voice, "what if one doesn't think it's important?" We were talking then about writing from personal experience, about her

¹ No real names of students are used.

instructor's assignment as a pedagogically valid feature of teaching effective writing. She added that her previous experience in composition had been limited to writing "reports," that is, writing summaries of acquired information. Personal experiences, openly subjective thoughts and opinions had no place in her reports, not in their invention, not in their focus, not in their purpose. She had been carefully taught to leave herself out of her writing; she had also accepted the implication that her "self" is not important. Perhaps she hadn't had the misfortune of being judged or treated on the basis of her surface features, but she didn't react to our discussion with the naivete such a lack of experience would suggest. Another possibility is that matters of mistreatment or feeling are too personal for her to discuss with a relative stranger; the writing assignment she was given assumes that drawing from personal thoughts and experiences is easy to do because every student has personal material from which to develop an essay. Besides the circumstance of Yolanda's having been taught not to use personal material, she may have other reasons, like distrust of a tutor or authority figure, for being unable to bring herself fully to the essay. Nevertheless, Yolanda was an uncomfortable writer; she wrote for only short periods and produced little material. Blankness seemed to serve as a defence against her discomfort even though beneath her passive veneer she was often annoyed with the task of composition, even angry.

Laura was another student who said she had only had experience in writing reports. She was slightly more willing than Yolanda to try writing from personal experience, or to give an opinion or to tell how she felt about her topics; nevertheless, doing these things embarrassed Laura. She was not convinced that self-informed writing has validity, that it could shape her writing or give it purpose. But she was courageous, willing to suspend disbelief, as it were, in experimenting

with self-referential writing techniques from which use she had been previously barred because of the inattention the profession has had regarding affect.

While Yolanda and Laura are considered to be basic writers, the reticence with which they approach personal investment in composing is shared by many upper level students as well. Karen was not the only upper division composition student who chose to write a survey type of research paper rather than an argumentative one because she thought a survey would exempt her from personal involvement, from making and applying critical observations of her subject and would therefore be easier. When I told her that her rough draft seemed like a string of quotations she said in alarm, "Well, isn't it supposed to be?" She added that anything she thought of "came from" her sources and therefore the ideas linking the quotes were also "theirs." Another student, Kerry, did not feel competent to critically examine published texts or disagree with her classmates; when pressed, she would say whether she liked the readings or not, but when asked why she liked or disliked them she would shrink, physically pull away and say "I don't know; well, I can't really say why." Especially if her opinion turned out to be a negative one, she would become visibly uncomfortable. Some might say Kerry's discomfort shows a lack of analytical skills more than a failure of affect. Yet critical analysis requires the assumption on the part of the critic that her comments are as valid as the material in the text, that the text is in fact criticizable. Kerry did lack analytical skills, but without the self-confidence required by criticism, she had no base on which she could build analytical skills.

² The word "text" itself helps to demystify written material, taking some works off their intellectual pedestals so that they might be more accessible to criticism; "text," of course, used in this way, is still new.

Kerry was more accustomed to a passive role and said that she would rather be told what the texts mean. Another student added that "the" interpretation of the texts is what matters; hers or any other variation of this meaning was not important. "So," Celia wanted to know, "what do you want me to write about (this text)? How long does it have to be?" Celia longed for "inspiration" and often verbalized complex and interesting ideas on which she might write, yet she managed to subvert inspiration and critical thinking, turning her ideas into drudgery because she insisted on the existence of something "out there" as having greater importance, more control of the situation. "None of my instructors have bothered to inspire me," she wrote. And her own ideas withered pathetically as she concentrated instead on the length of papers and what "she had always been told" about commas, for example. Celia had worthwhile things to say and could have developed them in her writing if she had accepted the notion of tapping the richest source of her ideas and drawing on it via writing; denying the validity of personal thought/experience as a source for expository writing effectively cut Celia off from her self as source of ideas and as source of inspiration.³

Receiving the attention it does in the work on writing apprehension and other problems, negative affects, such as the angst experienced by Karen, Kerry, and Celia, or the blank affects of Yolanda and Laura, may soon find a place in our understanding of their presence in the writing process. Yet, as Brand and Powell

³ The fact that I only reviewed the cases of women students suggests deep implications about the difficulty of discussing emotional scenarios. Though I discussed affective concerns with all my students, I realize that it was easier for me to modify or shape the women's attitudes; I felt more comfortable listening and making suggestions for change with people of my own gender. I also listened to the responses of the men students, but I was far less assertive in instructing them in affective concerns. It seems that the realm of the affective is not only considered immature relative to cognition but is also considered the province of women. This topic needs much further investigation; a deeper analysis here is beyond the scope of this paper.

state, a more balanced model of the affective dimension of the writing process needs to be developed. One possible advantage, however, of the focus on negative affects may be that through them we can extrapolate the role of their positive counterparts. For example, Larson concludes that the students who felt boredom had "never learned to find excitement in writing" (28). Presumably "excitement in writing" is a good thing, if not a necessary thing; how does one learn it? Certainly excitement in writing indicates some emotional engagement with the emerging product or the process. One of the bored students in Larson's study had "simply not learned that writing holds challenges; hence the option of becoming more personally involved was simply not there" (30). Again, how does one learn this? Yolanda and Laura, the basic writers mentioned above, had learned just the opposite, that writing was not challenging but tedious. Where in traditional pedagogy is the option of personal involvement? It is in some expressive writing (poetry, fiction, non-fiction, for example) and perhaps in the invention stage of other kinds of writing, but the affective involvement in writing, limited to expressive writing and narratives, is treated by the profession as the beginning, and only the beginning, of more "serious" expository writing.

Basic writers in particular have been disenfranchised from their connection to the milieu of the writer; the sense of community, belonging, and continuity is denied them, or simply unavailable to basic writers. Yes, they lack the skills that might help or enable that connection to form, but more importantly it is the realm of affect from which they are barred. Furthermore, since affect figures importantly in the sense of community, it seems more urgent to forge the affective connection first, establishing a comfortable, confident base on which to structure other skills; I discuss the significance of community in greater detail in chapter 4. As Mina Shaughnessy puts it, "Cut off from the impulse to say something, or from the sense

that anything he might say is important to anyone else, he [the basic writer] is automatically cut off from the grammatical intuitions that would serve him in a truly communicative situation" (Errors 86). As I have noted above, the need to construct narratives transcends forms; writing is not the only way to do it. But to be unable to use writing when one wants (or needs) to is incredibly frustrating; the inability is tantamount to thwarting the narrative impulse altogether, since the choice has been made to write, not to paint, speak, or photograph. Basic writers have been cut off from their own feelings/impulses/thoughts as the ultimate narrative source. Almost all the basic writers I've worked with expressed disdain and unfamiliarity with the notion of personally expressive writing, or of drawing from personal experience to explain or enhance writing topics, or of consciously acknowledging the author's presence as an individual in other kinds of writing. Basic writers, and some more advanced students too, generally feel that school-sponsored writing should be thoroughly devoid of any trace of the author's presence. Some of them have said, "you shouldn't put yourself in an essay," "I've never put my own feelings in a paper; I've only written reports," "you can't use 'I' in a paper," "but what does the teacher want? What should I say?" That writing can be anything of value other than the whimsical demands of apparently impractical curriculae is unknown to many student writers. As I mentioned earlier, a conclusion of Larson's is that those writers he studied who were bored or overly anxious had "never learned to find excitement in writing," or never found that writing "holds challenges" or is otherwise a worthwhile task (28, 30). But where or when does a student learn these things? Not in those schools where the affective dimension of composing is left out of the curriculum.

Interest in infusing curriculum with the affective dimension is increasing, however. Toward this end, Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia report that

"something more than cognitive skills is involved" in achieving the goal of "high literacy" (25). In "An Attainable Version of High Literacy: Approaches to Teaching Higher-Order Skills in Reading and Writing," Bereiter and Scardamalia discuss high literacy as associated with intentional learning, which, though rare, occurs when the student deliberately seeks to acquire some generalizable knowledge from the results of a task. The affective dimension of intentional learning includes "a motivational aspect . . . a willingness to invest effort in learning," the mental grappling which I mentioned in the first chapter (25). Current teaching models, according to Bereiter and Scardamalia, foster adaptive learning, where the learner satisfies the requirements or reaches the ceiling of the particular circumstances, at which point only an external prod would initiate further learning in the individual. Adaptive learners satisfy minimal requirements, goals which are externally set. Bereiter and Scardamalia contrast intentional and adaptive learning with the constructs, "knowledge transforming vs knowledge telling ." (25). When intentional learners transform knowledge they take new information, compare it to old, respond to it with whatever intellectual or emotional faculties are at their disposal. The result is new knowledge, new because intentional learners, through supportive teaching models, alter their previous knowledge with new connections and applications. Adaptive learners, on the other hand, tell knowledge. Adaptive learners are taught to acquire a given portion of new information and to show, or tell, that they have done so, often through reports or tests. Even if encouraged to do something with their acquired knowledge, to think further or apply it some way in a different context, the current teaching model does not support such a departure from the itinerary of things to know. What is left out of the adaptive learning scenario is sufficient attention to an individual's interests and intentions, an apparently important part of an individual's affect. As Bereiter and Scardamalia

put it, a learner's "interests and intentions are not just mediators of competence.

They are part of a person's competence--something to be developed" (14).

Educational psychologist Robert Slavin echoes Bereiter and Scardamalia's assertions. In "Non-Cognitive Outcomes of Cooperative Learning," Slavin makes the case that affective and cognitive gains are both important; one should not be sacrificed to the other.

Chapter 4

The Affective Dimension in Writing as Narrative:

The Importance of Acceptance

An essential understanding to be distilled from the foregoing discussion is that affect is a basic component of intelligence or mental functioning. Another conclusion to be drawn is that affect is not normally inactive; to reach that state it must be suppressed or ignored. In what way, then, is affect so essential, so dynamic and interactive? The importance of affect lies in the way it informs our drive to connect with the world around us. As Roland Barthes puts it, ours is a "humanity tirelessly undertaking to create meaning, without which it would no longer be human" (305). We hypothesize, explain, test, wonder; we juxtapose separate ideas and in doing so create new ideas. We compare disparate things to each other and thus enhance, invent, facilitate, or obscure meaning. The drive to understand, the need to explain and create are affect-powered. As I discussed in chapter 3, the affective dimension of writing can be well understood as "The Why of Cognition," to use Brand's title. Yet this meaning-making is subject to the limitation or shaping of feelings that goes on in school; constructing meaning becomes clandestine, even truncated, where school learning requires the student to tamp down affect, or to report on meaning, not construct it. As Gardner notes, "Most contemporary psychological analyses assume an individual eager to learn; but, in fact, such factors as proper motivation, an affective state conducive to learning, a set of values that favors a particular kind of learning, and a supporting cultural context are indispensable (though often elusive) factors in the educational process" (373). All of these indispensable factors are primarily affective concepts: motivation, values,

the support of a cultural milieu. Further, the educational process he speaks of need not be limited to the formal school kind. But how do we understand these concepts? How do we classify motivation, for example; what do we do with values; of what use is a supporting culture? The use to which we put our affective knowledge is the construction of narrative in an effort to build meaning. Moreover, narrative making, which includes writing, is the primary mode of meaning construction. Affect not only impels this force; affect also mediates our construction before we can narrate it, like a filter, regulating our interpretations.

By discussing narrative's fundamental place in human nature, Bennett Simon illuminates much of the affective dimension, strengthening the connection of affect to writing.⁴ In "Tragic Drama and the Family: The Killing of Children and the Killing of Story-Telling," Simon discusses how the listeners, the audience of ancient epic tales, gained an awareness of past, present and future as though their lives and the narrative, and the characters in the narrative, were "somehow part of the same time warp and woof" (153). I would add that the composers of epic tales also gained this connection to others, past and future; these tales were often altered, or restructured, by the listeners, and by the act of retelling, so that everyone involved in creating the epic became connected. Ancient drama also took "for granted a human need and wish for such nourishing and culturally sustaining narratives" (162). The connection narrative provides us to the world is one of community and chronology--the affirming presence of others and security in the sense of past, present, and future. In Beckett's Endgame, for example, Simon points out that "we

⁴ Perhaps it is easier to perceive the affective dimension in narrative, since the drive to narrate is more fundamental than the impulse to write, which is only one kind of narrative. We can also narrate through dance, song, painting, film, physical posture, etc. Writing is an especially important form to the culture whose language-base is a written one.

witness the progressive degradation and dissolution of the fundamental human activity of telling a story. The motives to tell a story [construct a narrative] are gradually eroded as it becomes clearer that there is no audience interested in hearing and that the story-teller must increasingly talk to himself" (166). Not only are the story-telling or narrative-making motives eroded by lack of audience interest, but the story or narrative itself disintegrates. Community and temporal security depend on the intact relationship between narrator and audience (or listener, or reader); if one half of the partnership is impaired in any way, the narrative between them is also impaired.

Getting back to narrative as writing then, a disintegrated composition may indicate this lack of connection to an audience. This lack of connection can be construed as a lack of a supporting cultural context, or it can indicate a sense of not being heard, not being understood, not being accepted as part of the community of teller/listener. A breach in the connection of writer to reader, audience, purpose, or text seems especially apparent in the situation where the irrationality of dysfunctional rules is explained to the writer, yet the writer persists in clinging to them. Ironically, our students have been telling us about this breach for years: "what do you want me to write?" "how many pages does it have to be?" "personal writing is not important," "writing essays is not important for the job I want," "can't use 'I' in a paper," "I have nothing to say." These often-heard comments betray a superficial relationship of writer to various aspects of writing, the reader, the purpose, the text itself.

Simon's work with how the capacity for narrating functions in tragic drama as a kind of mental health barometer can be extrapolated to forms other than tragic drama, particularly those narrative forms which also highlight the connection of writer/narrator to audience. Some features of the writer/narrator to audience

connection are a strong sense of community and continuity with one's people (particularly one's family) and a sense of on-going chronology (the sense that someone has come before and others will come after, a kind of immortality). What Simon does with these sources of connection is show how they are reflected, depicted, conveyed through the narrative of tragedy and through the narratives made by the characters within the story. In Simon's words, "if there is terrible trouble within the family and a threat from within to the family's existence, we hear of anxiety about narrating and anxiety about time" (153).

To expand a little, if a character feels alienated from the community, or the continuity of the community's existence is threatened, that character's narrative-making ability will be hampered, indicating the presence of anxiety. That character may express anxiety about narrative in a number of ways; that character may have difficulty speaking, or be silenced by a secret, or be denied an audience--anyone to listen to or receive the narrative. The same phenomena happen in other forms of narrative; the basic need to narrate is not limited by form, such as speaking or writing, but by other needs, such as the need for audience, someone to receive the narrative and the need to express oneself without impediment. To see a mundane example of narrative and its relationship to human needs, think about the impulse to tell another person about a particularly bad day. Perhaps you groan, make grandiose statements like, "this was the worst day ever in my life." Perhaps when you get to actually narrating the events, you start to gesticulate wildly, your voice gets louder, you moan. Something happened that threatened your psychological equilibrium and your narrative shows it; it's riddled with anxiety; you can't speak (narrate) clearly or normally, only in grunts or shouts. Another response to the bad day may be not wanting to talk about it, in other words, not wanting, or not feeling able, to construct that narrative. Or, suppose no one is available to listen should

you want to talk (narrate); does that not feel isolating, lonely, cut off, discontinuous with other human beings? Thus "chariness of speaking" also indicates anxiety (Simon 156); in writing, terse or sparse language may indicate the writer's anxiety on any of a number of levels.

To illustrate narrational anxiety further, Simon provides numerous examples from literature. A particularly striking one is the line from Macbeth (V, 5, ll. 26-8): life is "a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/Signifying nothing." The comparison of Macbeth's troubled life to a narrative is particularly telling; the language shows Macbeth's anxiety, that his connection to his world is profoundly threatened. (Note too that Macbeth must keep his ambitious feelings and murders secret with Lady Macbeth; at the point she can no longer provide an audience for Macbeth, his world, as betrayed by his narrative, breaks down.) As these two examples show, the common ground shared by the mundane and the literary is the narrative.

The concept of expository writing as another kind of narrative presupposes a definition of "narrative" broader than "telling a story"; it includes the impulse to tell our stories, to tell something about ourselves. The concept also presupposes a writer with a purpose, a writer having something to say. With Simon's insights we can then see that blocking, for example, is an extreme manifestation of narrational anxiety, that other difficulties with writing, especially those that persist in the face of remedial pedagogy, show a disturbance in the relationship between the writer and her or his milieu, or some aspect of it, whether the subject matter, the community of writers, the social community. Applebee and others seem to recognize the need to narrate when they argue that "school writing must be motivated by a need to communicate and must be valued as an expression of something the writer wants to say" (180). Shaughnessy also recognizes the narrative

need of writing, but, unfortunately, documents that school sponsored writing does not facilitate the need or desire to communicate but supplants it with an artificial purpose. According to Shaughnessy, real or non-artificial writing is highly personal. A psychological connection to one's environment--and to one's text--is thus all important to the successful writer; it enables audience awareness, guides grammatical/linguistic choices (Shaughnessy Errors), and informs the writer's purpose. This connection, largely dependent on perception, is ruled by the writer's affect.

Affect thus serves as a filter, allowing us, in part, to make choices among the infinite possibilities available to us in reasoning, to determine which options we find acceptable, as previously noted. Affect provides a standard of sorts against which we can measure any option; thus we have opinions, values, weaknesses, strengths, penchants, peeves. Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt, and Stephen Krashen coined the term "affective filter" to name the phenomenon second-language learners experience in using an unmastered language. In the new language situation, the speaker's affect will control how much speaking the learner can comfortably do. The affective filter sets a limit on discomfort, allowing the speaker to experience psychologically threatening situations only to an extent with which the individual can cope. Another kind of filtering is what Paul de Man offers as an explanation of resistant thinking. In "The Resistance to Theory," de Man points out that "It is a recurrent strategy of any anxiety to defuse what it considers threatening by magnification or minimization, by attributing to it claims to power of which it is bound to fall short" (5). Actually, de Man's use of the word "anxiety" could be better understood as the affective dimension in a state of threat. Writing itself is threatening for some; the rigidity or clinging that Rose says characterizes writer's block may be the filter, or defense mechanism, employed when the impulse to

narrate clashes with the suppression of affect, the suppression of the need to narrate, making the act of writing threatening.. Thus, affect enables us to defuse threat, whether we're threatened by speaking a new language, or by new theories which challenge our current beliefs, or by the act of writing itself.

Affect can therefore serve as a common denominator, or filter, for the decision making process involved in making sense of the world, in speaking a foreign language, and in writing. Not surprisingly then, a similarity exists in the writing difficulties of second language learners who lack self-confidence, have low motivation, and who have high anxiety with the writing problems of basic writers (Clark, Irene 74). Moreover, it is the individual nature of this decision making process that "determines cognitive style and writing style" (Brand 437). As Brannon and Knoblauch have told us, choices exist throughout the composing process; the choices exist for the individual.⁵

Yet another area of composition where the affective dimension of writing is particularly visible is in the area of writer as reader responding to texts, whether self generated by the student writer or written by a professional. In Norman Holland's essay, "Unity Identity Text Self," he talks about the interaction of self and text, saying that readers bring their identities into their interpretations of texts. Each reading creates a new experience:

"we interpret the new experience in such a way as to cast it in the terms of our characteristic way of coping with the world. That is, each of us will find in the literary work the kind of thing we characteristically wish or fear the most. Therefore, to respond, we need to be able to re-create from the literary work our characteristic strategies for dealing with those deep fears and wishes" (124).

⁵ Even other points of view, such as cognitive-based perspectives of composition, assume the decision making character of writing, if not the individuality; primarily cognitive models seek to enumerate discrete steps in the writing process and connect these in flow-chart fashion.

In producing a composition, a student constructs a text; to re-read it, to revise, to work with it, these same strategies which Holland talks about in terms of responding to a "literary work," must go on in the writer writing.

This need to re-create the literary work is basically the same as the need to narrate. In re-creating the text we are constructing a new narrative, one which includes or connects us to it. Denial of this inclusion or connection is what happens when the writer does not see the product as a text, does not see the validity or applicability of responding as a reader to either the self-generated paper or to the published essay assigned as exemplary reading. The writer might not feel included or see a connection between self and text if this aspect of writing, the affective dimension, has been closed to the writer.

Chapter 5

Facilitating the Writing as Narrative Connection

Though the affective dimension is difficult to quantify or objectify in a way that would make it easy to work with, we should not ignore it. Its nebulousness and individuality are not appropriate reasons to bypass understanding it and using that understanding in our teaching. Indeed, some researchers have found solutions, ways to reestablish the writing-as-narrative connection by calling upon the affective dimension. Brannon and Knoblauch, for example, offer ways the written communication between teacher and student can effect the narrative connection; other teaching formats include reader-response work (where the reader can be the writer or a peer, and the response can be to a student composition or a published text), and one-to-one conferencing.

Throughout the process of learning to write effectively, students need to be asked what they feel, what they intend. They need explanations for why and how their feelings and intentions affect their work, and they need to know that their work is a valid expression of themselves. Brannon and Knoblauch offer general questions that teachers can ask their students, pointing out that "Writers know what they intended to communicate. Readers know what a text has actually said to them. If writers and readers can exchange information about intention and effect, they can negotiate ways to bring actual effect as closely in line with a desired intention as possible" (162). This negotiation forges the connection of intention and effect as well as the connection of writer and reader--the narrative bond. Questions as to what the writer intended to communicate can specifically facilitate invention,

helping writers determine or refine what they want to say; such questions can also shape writers' purposes, give form to their thoughts, suggest structures for their ideas. Such questions can also guide drafting and revising, suggest other issues the writer may need to address in order to forge the narrative connection with the reader (or community or audience).

In the context of this questioning of the writer, Brannon and Knoblauch state that the responses of a reader to a writer should be, "Ideally, . . . face to face" (163). But where individual attention is difficult to facilitate, Brannon and Knoblauch suggest "a way for teachers to simulate the conference model without having the student actually present" (163). Their model calls for the drafting of an essay where a student writes the purposes of drafted paragraphs in a wide margin next to the draft itself. The teacher then comments on the effectiveness of the draft relative to the stated purposes, and may comment on the purposes as well, or those the teacher perceives but the writer has not explained. Multiple draft assignments, of course, are necessary because they provide students with "the opportunity to reassert their points of view or to explain what they were trying to do. . . . [and] provide an opportunity for dialogue about how effectively the writer's choices have enabled the communication of intentions" (162).⁶ As Brannon and Knoblauch note, the shift in "focus then will be, not on the distance between text and some teacher's personal notion of its most ideal version, but rather on the disparity between what the writer wanted to communicate and what the choices residing in the text actually cause readers to understand" (161). This kind of communication between teacher

⁶ I would add that, in general, writing assignments should compel students to draw on their thoughts and feelings as well as their experiences and newly learned material.

and student amounts to no less than the acknowledgement of the writer as a source of legitimate feeling; it provides the basis for that crucial narrative connection.

Another method which forges the writer's narrative connection to others is reader-response work, applying the theories of Louise Rosenblatt, Stanley Fish, and others, which assert the primacy of the reader in constructing meaning from a text. In reader response work, the writer receives responses from actual readers, whether peers or teachers. Both kinds of readers should read for understanding and tell the author what the reading experience was like. A reader can say, for example, "It sounds like you're saying such and such," "I don't know if you mean this or that," or "Your spare use of adjectives makes the description really strong." These responses must be typical of how the reader would respond to any text, without taking into account that the text was only written by a student, or was only a class assignment. This kind of true response is what Virginia Chappell calls for in her paper, "Teaching Like a Reader Instead of Reading Like a Teacher." Chappell says that students need to see "the interactive nature of written discourse," what happens when a real reader encounters students' written texts (7). What happens when real readers encounter students' texts is the reception of the students' narratives. The subjective responses of readers to the narratives are important insofar as they determine whether the students' very real need for narrative connection is met or not.

The narrative connection can also be fostered by eliciting the same type of responses to published texts. A reader response discussion of published work has the benefit of showing students that published writing features the same skills they are learning and is subject to the same freedoms and limitations of student work. Reading logs, for example, require students to actively respond to the assigned text; in a journal format, students question the text's meaning and its effect upon them.

When they actively respond to the text's narrative, students complete the narrative circle. In other words, the students as readers are placed on the receiving end of the narrative connection; as readers they function as the community with which the narrative must connect in order to make sense.

Understanding and facilitating the need for narrative connection is best accomplished face-to-face with peers, as discussed above, or with the teacher, as outlined by Charles W. Dawe and Edward A. Dornan. The one-to-one interaction provides the "Instant feedback followed by immediate revision [which] is the heart of the conference method," according to their book, One-to-One: Resources for Conference-Centered Writing (4). Dawe and Dornan provide a system of short individual conferences that can supplant a regular classroom method, but work within the same time frame. Dawe and Dornan draw support from a study completed by the Los Angeles Community College District. The report, titled, "Testing the Effectiveness of the One-To-One Method of Teaching Composition," shows that "students taught in conference-centered classes made significantly greater gains in writing proficiency than students taught in nonconference classes. Moreover, . . . morale was higher among teachers and students in conference classes than in nonconference classes" (Dawe and Dornan 5). (The report also shows that cost of teaching is not affected. The same teacher/student ratio exists; only the teaching method is changed.)

The method, first elaborated by Roger Garrison, begins with individual conferences held with a student based on a previously obtained sample of the student's writing. From this conference, the teacher, with the student, determines the writer's instructional needs. The student works on subsequent drafts in class; the teacher confers briefly with the student throughout the composing process. Notes are kept by the teacher as to which skills the writer needs to work on, which

have been mastered, which need to be worked on by the entire class. What the individual conference has that works so well is the face-to-face exchange, noted above as "ideal" by Brannon and Knoblauch, centered on the writer, the work in progress, and the all-important narrative connection which the writer seeks to make through the written text. Conferencing also promotes the students' texts as legitimate expressions of themselves in writing, a function of the fundamental impulse to narrate our lives, to use the language of Simon.

The concern shown in the conference for the student relative to the work must be genuine on the part of both teacher and student. Students who are not used to consulting their feelings or who do not understand how affect is connected to writing can easily withdraw intellectually, by not paying attention, or physically, by hiding behind another student; there are many ways as I mentioned earlier people can defend against psychological threat. In a large class, this avoidance can go unchecked. In an individual conference, this behavior can be dealt with before teaching continues; it must be dealt with if the teaching is to be effective.

Another benefit of conferencing is that it involves students directly in the instructional process, establishing students' rights to their own texts, to combine the language of Dawe and Dornan, Brannon and Knoblauch. Shaughnessy offers more concrete benefits, asserting that "the conference between teacher and student remains the best way to discover how students have perceived their instructions"; she adds that "the ability to revise or proofread is probably most effectively developed when students in small groups become one another's audiences" (Errors 287).

The benefits of conferencing, as well as the benefits of the other methods discussed in this chapter have in common the acknowledgement of the affective dimension, the acknowledgement of connection through narrative. Let me add to

the list of benefits empowering, the way Leslie Ashcroft uses it. In "Defining 'Empowering,'" Ashcroft recognizes that the ability or power to write effectively is "present in the students themselves" (144). Transmitting this recognition to the student, face-to-face, is utterly legitimizing. That this power to write effectively is possessed by the student, however latently, testifies to the importance we attach to the ability to write, the most common means of expressing our narrative impulse. What the research I have discussed has shown is that although these benefits are primarily affective, that is, they serve our feelings, our psychological needs, these benefits are not superfluous instructional luxuries. For effective writing, they are imperatives.

References

- Adler, Alfred. The Education of the Individual. New York: Greenwood, 1958.
- Allen, Vernon L. "Impact of the Role of Tutor on Behavior and Self-Perceptions." Levine and Wang 367-90.
- Applebee, Arthur N. Contexts for Learning to Write: Studies of Secondary School Instruction. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984.
- . Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: A History. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1974.
- Ashcroft, Leslie. "Defining 'Empowering': The What and the Why." Language Arts 64 (1987): 142-56.
- Baer, Donald M. "What is an Attribution, That Thou Art Mindful of It?" Levine and Wang (271-80)
- Barthes, Roland. "The Structuralist Activity." Contemporary Literary Criticism: Modernism through Post-Structuralism. Ed. Robert Con Davis. NY: Longman, 1986. 302-6.
- Bereiter, Carl and Marlene Scardamalia. "An Attainable Version of High Literacy: Approaches to Teaching Higher-Order Skills in Reading and Writing." Curriculum Inquiry 17 (1987): 9-30.
- Bizzell, Patricia. "What Happens When Basic Writers Come to College?" College Composition and Communication 37 (1986): 294-301.
- Black, Claudia. It Will Never Happen to Me. Denver: MAC, 1981.
- Bloom, Benjamin S., J. Thomas Hastings, and George F. Madaus. Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning. New York: McGraw, 1971.
- Blumenfeld, Phyllis C., et al. "Teacher Talk and Student Thought: Socialization into the Student Role." Levine and Wang 143-192.

- Bowers, John Waite. "Classroom Communication Apprehension: A Survey." Communication Education 35 (1986): 372-78.
- Brand, Alice G. "The Why of Cognition: Emotion and the Writing Process." College Composition and Communication 38 (1987): 436-44.
- Brand, Alice G. and Jack Powell. "Emotions and the Writing Process: A Description of Apprentice Writers." Journal of Educational Research 79 (1986): 280-285.
- Brannon, Lil and C. H. Knoblauch. "On Students' Rights to Their Own Texts: A Model of Teacher Response." College Composition and Communication 33 (1982): 157-66.
- Britton, James, Tony Burgess, Nancy Martin, Alex McLeod, and Harold Rosen. The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18). London: Macmillan, 1975.
- Brophy, Jere E. and Thomas L. Good. Teacher-Student Relationships: Causes and Consequences. New York: Holt, 1974.
- Bruner, Jerome S. Toward a Theory of Instruction. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1966.
- Chappell, Virginia A. "Teaching Like a Reader Instead of Reading Like a Teacher." Pacific Coast Writing Centers Assn. Conference. Davis, Oct. 1987.
- Clark, Irene L. Writing in the Center: Teaching in a Writing Center Setting. Dubuque, IA: Kendall, 1985.
- Clark, Paul A. "Individual Education: Application of Adler's Personality Theory." The Clearing House Sept. 1985: 35-38.
- Colwell, Rosemary. "Don't Forget the Human Touch." Learning 86 Sept. 1986: 130
- Connors, Patricia. "Making Private Writing Public: Teaching Expressive Writing in the Composition Class." Teaching English in the Two-Year College 15 (1988): 25-8.

Cooper, Harris M. "Communication of Teacher Expectations to Students." Levine and Wang 193-212.

Covington, Martin V. and Richard G. Beery. Self-Worth and School Learning. New York: Holt, 1976.

Daly, John A. "Writing Apprehension." Rose 43-82.

D'Angelo, Frank J. "The Search for Intelligible Structure in the Teaching of Composition." The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook. Eds. Gary Tate and Edward P. J. Corbett. New York: Oxford UP, 1981.

Dawe, Charles W. and Edward A. Dornan. One to One: Resources for Conference-Centered Writing. Instructor's ed. Boston: Little, 1987.

De Man, Paul. "The Resistance to Theory." The Resistance to Theory. Ed. Paul de Man. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P, 1986. 3-20.

Dulay, Heidi, Marina Burt, and Stephen Krashen. Language Two. New York: Oxford UP, 1982.

Edelsberg, Charles M. "Teachers and Writing Programs in Evolution." Educational Horizons 64 (1985): 28-31.

Elbow, Peter. Writing with Power. New York: Oxford UP, 1981.

Elias, Julius A. Plato's Defence of Poetry. Albany: SUNY, 1984.

Emig, Janet. "Writing as a Mode of Learning." The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook. Eds. Gary Tate and Edward P. J. Corbett. New York: Oxford UP, 1981.

Entwisle, Doris R. and Leslie Alec Hayduk. "Modeling Young Children's Performance Expectations." Levine and Wang 249-270.

Foley, Joseph J. "Evaluation of Learning in Writing." Bloom, Hastings, and Madaus 767-814.

Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism. Ed. Josue V. Harari. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1979.

Frieze, Irene Hanson, William D. Francis, Barbara Hartman Hanusa. "Defining Success in Classroom Settings." Levine and Wang 3-28.

Gagne, Robert M. The Conditions of Learning. 2nd ed. New York: Holt, 1965.

Gardner, Howard. Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

Garrison, Roger. How a Writer Works. New York: Harper, 1981.

Giordano, Gerard. "Attitude Toward Writing: An Inventory." Academic Therapy 22 (1987): 419-22.

Gurney, Peter W. "Enhancing Self-Esteem by the Use of Behavior Modification Techniques." Contemporary Educational Psychology 12 (1987): 30-41.

Haas, Christina and Linda Flower. "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning." College Composition and Communication 39 (1988): 185-97.

Harriott, Rosemary. Poetry and Criticism Before Plato. London: Methuen, 1969.

Harris, Muriel. "Diagnosing Writing Process Problems: A Pedagogical Application of Speaking -Aloud Protocol Analysis." Rose 166-181.

Harris, Muriel, ed. Tutoring Writing: A Sourcebook for Writing Labs. Glenview, IL: Scott, 1982.

Hawkins, Thom. "Intimacy and Audience: The Relationship between Revision and the Social Dimension of Peer Tutoring." Harris (27-31)

Hillocks, George jr. Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching. Urbana, IL: NCRE and ERIC, 1986.

Holland, Norman. "Unity Identity Text Self." Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism. Ed. Jane P. Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1980. 118-33.

Jolly, Peggy. "Meeting the Challenge of Developmental Writers." Teaching English in the Two-Year College 14 (1987): 32-40.

Kearns, Edward A. "Practicing What We Teach in Writing." English Journal Oct. 1985: 28-33.

Kirby, Donald J. "Covenants Between Students and Faculty: The Interview as a Keystone in the Senior Seminar." Liberal Education 72 (1986): 157-66.

Kitzhaber, Albert R. Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College. New York: McGraw, 1963.

Knodt, Ellen Andrews. "The Aims Approach to More Effective Writing." Teaching English in the Two-Year College 13 (1986): 30-40.

Koch, Kenneth. Wishes, Lies, and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry. New York: Chelsea, 1971.

Kurth, Anita. "Writing as Performance and the Need for Applause." Teaching English in the Two-Year College 14 (1987): 22-6.

Larson, Reed. "Emotional Scenarios in the Writing Process: An Examination of Young Writers' Affective Experiences." Rose 19-42.

Levine, John M. "Social Comparison and Education." Levine and Wang 29-56.

Levine, John M. and Margaret C. Wang, eds. Teacher and Student Perceptions: Implications for Learning. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1983.

McClelland, Ben W. and Timothy R. Donovan, eds. Perspectives on Research and Scholarship in Composition. New York: MLA, 1985.

Middleton, James E. and John D. Reiff. "A 'Student-Based' Approach to Writing Assignments." College Composition and Communication 36 (1985): 232-4.

Murdoch, Iris. The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.

Myers, Greg. "Reality, Concensus and Reform in the Rhetoric of Composition Teaching." College English 48 (1986): 154-74.

Olds, Robert S. "Enhancing Self-Esteem Through Mutual Self-Disclosure." The Journal of School Health 57 (1987): 160-1.

Perl, Sondra. "Basic Writers in the Process of Composing." Basic Writing: Essays for Teachers, Researchers, and Administrators. Eds. Lawrence N. Kasden and Daniel R. Hoerber. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1980. 13-34.

Plato. Phaedrus. Trans. C. J. Rowe. Wiltshire, England: Aris and Phillips, 1986.

Rohrkemper, Mary M. and Jere E. Brophy. "Teachers' Thinking About Problem Students." Levine and Wang 75-104.

Rose, Mike. "Complexity, Rigor, Evolving Method, and the Puzzle of Writer's Block: Thoughts on Composing-Process Research." Rose 227-60.

---. "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Block." College Composition and Communication 31 (1980): 389-401.

Rose, Mike, ed. When a Writer Can't Write. New York: Guilford, 1985.

Rosen, Lois Matz. "Developing Correctness in Student Writing: Alternatives to the Error Hunt." English Journal Mar. 1987: 62-9.

Rosenblatt, Louise M. Literature as Exploration. New York: Appleton, 1938.

Rubin, Theodore Isaac. One to One: Understanding Personal Relationships. New York: Viking, 1983.

Shaughnessy, Mina P. "Basic Writing." Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographic Essays. Ed. Gary Tate. Fortworth, TX: Christian UP, 1976. 137-68.

- . Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing. New York: Oxford UP, 1977.
- Simard, Rodney. "Reducing Fear and Resistance By Attacking the Myths." College Teaching. 33.3 (1985): 101-7.
- Simmons, Jo An McGuire, Dir. "Testing the Effectiveness of the One-to-One Method of Teaching Composition: Improvement of Learning in English Project." CCC Convention. Wash., DC, 1980.
- Simon, Bennett. "Tragic Drama and the Family: the Killing of Children and the Killing of Story-Telling." Discourse in Psychoanalysis and Literature. Ed. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan. London: Methuen, 1987. 152-75.
- Slavin, Robert E. "Non-Cognitive Outcomes of Cooperative Learning." Levine and Wang 341-66.
- Wang, Margaret C. "Development and Consequences of Students' Sense of Personal Control." Levine and Wang 213-47.
- White, Patricia. "Self-Respect, Self-Esteem and the School: A Democratic Perspective on Authority." Teachers College Record 88 (1986): 95-106.
- Whiting, Bryan and Gary F. Render. "Cognitive and Affective Outcomes of Mastery Learning: A Review of Sixteen Semesters." The Clearing House. 60 (1987): 276-80.
- Whitman, Neal A., David C. Spendlove, and Claire H. Clark. Increasing Students' Learning: A Faculty Guide to Reducing Stress Among Students. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report 4. Washington, DC: ASHE, 1986.